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## Helping Others



(l. to r.) Anthony Truglia, Jr.; Sound Cyclists Bicycle Club President Emil Albanese; Rep. Christel Truglia; Tad Diesel, Area Vice President of Government and Public Affairs for Cablevision in Connecticut; and Debbie Horne, Development Coordinator for the Make-A-Wish Foundation of Connecticut pose together at Harvest Rides 2003 at Luciano Park in Westport on September 14, 2003. The Truglias and Mr. Diesel were among hundreds of cyclists who participated in this Sound Cyclists Bicycle Club fundraiser for the Make-A-Wish Foundation of Connecticut, which raised \$40,000 for eight wishes granted to children coping with serious medical conditions.



year battle with leukemia. David was admitted twice to Yale-New Haven Children's Hospital and was a recipient of their toy closet program on each admission. His family wanted to remember David by establishing a toy closet for pediatric patients in Stamford.

Renowned children's illustrator and author Judith Caseley of Long Island, New York created the mural on the doors of the toy closet.

Christel standing in front of David's Treasure Tree, a toy closet in the pediatric unit at The Stamford Hospital. The toy closet offers new, age-appropriate toys and gifts to any child admitted on the pediatric floor.

David's Treasure Tree, is so named to honor David Bennett Kanarek, a 15 year old who lost his 5

Stamford's own Speaker of the House Moira Lyons will be retiring from the legislature after twenty-four years of service to Connecticut. Moira has lead the fight on transportation issues, school readiness, HMO reform and many other issues. She has represented Stamford with style and grace and I want to express my personal thanks to Moira and wish her the very best.

### Good-bye to a Great Lady



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STATE REPRESENTATIVE  
CHRISTEL TRUGLIA

# CHRISTEL TRUGLIA

State Representative capitol news 2004

## Medical Malpractice: The Crisis Continues

Governor Rowland made good on his promise to veto the medical malpractice legislation passed this session because it did not contain caps. Access to health care is being impacted today by the current medical malpractice crisis. Five years ago there were 15 companies writing malpractice coverage policies in Connecticut, today there are two. The reason is simple; our medical liability system is broken.

Everyone agrees that patients should have the right to sue if they are harmed. We all agree that victims of malpractice should be fully compensated for their medical bills and lost wages. The issue is whether caps on the non-economic damages, \$350,000 for physicians and \$650,000 for hospitals, should be adopted. Physicians tell us that this is the only way they can get relief from skyrocketing medical malpractice costs. Without help doctors will leave the state or curtail their practice, making it more difficult for patients to receive medical care.

The Fairfield County Medical Association reports 18% of physicians no longer perform high-risk surgery, 34% have dropped Medicaid patients, 34% have reduced or eliminated pro-bono care and 14% have reduced the number of sicker, more complex, high-risk patients they see. Two years ago we had 13 physicians practicing general and thoracic surgery in Stamford, today we have only six. It is not uncommon for OB/GYN's to see their medical malpractice insurance costs increase by 100%.

If the current liability crisis is left unchecked our medical care delivery system may be changed forever. Without a physician there is no health care.

Our state is home to some of the most respected doctors in the world - we must keep it that way. It is my hope that we will have a special session to address this medical crisis and pass legislation which protects both patients and doctors.

## Delaying Property Revaluation

Responding to the request of many residents and local officials, the Stamford delegation worked to pass legislation that would allow municipalities to postpone revaluation. This legislation is not mandatory but allows towns, if they wish, to postpone implementing revaluations until 2006 for Grand List years 2003, 2004 and 2005. Stamford was seeking to approve a delay of the October 2003 revaluation.

The bill also changes the minimum time between revaluations from four years to five years. Revaluations alternate between physical assessment of properties and statistical assessment, which is based on community trends and recent sales.

## 145<sup>TH</sup> DISTRICT

### Stamford







Christel with Representative Carlo Leone meeting with students from the New Canaan Country Day School who came to the Capitol to lobby on behalf of the Clean Car legislation.

**Child Poverty Council:** The number of Connecticut children living in poverty increased from 76,572 to 82,866 in the last decade according to the most recent U.S. Census. I advocated for legislation that would establish a Child Poverty Council comprised of legislative leaders, field experts, service providers, and parents. The council's mission would be to reduce the number of Connecticut children living in poverty by 50 percent by July 1, 2014.

**School Readiness Funding:** School Readiness has a proven record of success in preparing Connecticut's three and four year olds for elementary school and eliminating the achievement gap. After seven years of rising costs and no increase, I was successful in raising the per child slot reimbursement and increasing the competitive grants. Unallocated and unused School Readiness slot funds can now be re-distributed to programs that have a waiting list and for professional development of school readiness staff. Stamford will see \$2.9 million in School Readiness funding.

**Helping Adoptive Parents:** Under newly enacted legislation, people who adopt children through the public child welfare system and the Department of Children and Families will be able to keep or purchase state health insurance at group rates. The health insurance does not cost taxpayers any money as the adoptive parents pay the entire premium. This is a small investment in both the health and well being of these families and their adopted children.

**Care4Kids:** The budget contains funding to pay for 3300 additional slots in The Care4Kids program. This program helps low-income working families pay for daycare.

**Health:** Insurance companies will now provide coverage of at least \$350 for a wig prescribed by a licensed oncologist for a patient who suffers hair loss as a result of chemotherapy. A patient's outlook and self-confidence are an important part of treatment process.

**Organ Donation Registry:** Legislation was enacted creating an organ donor registry using the Department of Motor Vehicles records. The registry will be available to organ donor procurement agencies. While driver's licenses bear a red stamp identifying an individual as a donor, donor permission must be signed with two people witnessing to be valid. Often an organ donor's wishes were not known if a license could not be found.

**Transportation and Metro North:** The recent tractor-trailer accident in Bridgeport again focused attention on the state's transportation infrastructure. Legislation passed this year allows for more revenue to be available for transportation projects and allocates \$60 million in bonding coupled with



funds on hand to purchase new railcars and make 2000 more seats on Metro North. This is only the first step in trying to refurbish the Metro North fleet.

**Protecting The Environment:** The Long Island Sound moratorium on state agency considerations or final decisions on applications relating to electric power line, gas pipeline, or telecommunications crossings was extended until June 3, 2005.

Legislation was passed to ensure that open space would continue to be protected in our state. All proceeds by water companies must be divided between ratepayers and company's shareholders by a pre-determined formula. This legislation will encourage water companies to set aside more open space for future generations to enjoy.

**Veterans' Property Tax Exemption:** The General Assembly reaffirmed its commitment to Connecticut's honorable servicemen and women by passing legislation that enables both active duty servicemen and women and veterans or their immediate families to continue to receive certain veterans' property tax exemptions if they move to a new town within that assessment year. Tax assessors must provide a certificate that verifies eligibility to each person who receives an exemption.



**State Budget:** This year we passed a budget that includes no new taxes, eliminates the need to securitize over \$300 million in tobacco revenue and is \$136 million under the spending cap. Stamford will see a \$2.3 million increase in state grant funding.

- Co-payments and premiums were eliminated for Medicaid and HUSKY clients. We also extended state benefits to legal immigrants.
- The ConnPACE asset test and estate recovery was eliminated.
- The Sales Tax Free Week for clothing and footwear costing less than \$300 has been reinstated for the fourth week of August 2004.
- We added \$4.6 million for the Department of Mental Retardation waiting list.
- The \$500 property tax credit was reinstated beginning in 2005.
- The Educational Cost Sharing Grant was increased \$40 million.
- The budget added \$1 million in financial aid for students at the state's public and private colleges and universities.
- We added \$3.4 million for more state troopers.

**Stamford's Share:** We made adjustments to the ECS formula to increase Stamford's funding to \$5,698,844 and priority schools received an additional \$1 million, bringing that total to \$2,584,125. Stamford's Academy of Information Technology Science/Aquaculture magnet school will receive an additional \$10 million in state funding, raising the total to \$41,799,106. Rogers Elementary School will receive \$800,000 for library technology upgrades. Westville High School will be receiving a grant for \$57,190 for improvements. Rebuilding at Vidal Court will receive \$5 million per year for the next five years in state funding. The lower level theatre at the Palace Theatre will receive \$2 million to complete renovation and \$500,000 was allocated to rebuild an estuary at Cove Island Park.

